

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4472  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA  
AMCONSUL BUKAVU  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KIGALI 11

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, EGEN, EAID, RW

SUBJECT: TRENDS IN RWANDA: DECEMBER 1976

HEREWITH THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF MONTHLY REPORTS ON  
DEVELOPMENTS IN RWANDA AFFECTING IDENTIFIED U.S. INTERESTS  
HERE (BRIEFLY: RWANDA'S THIRD WORLD ROLE, ITS UNDERDEVELOP-  
MENT, AND ITS POPULATION/FOOD/ENERGY PROBLEMS).

SUMMARY: RWANDA ONCE AGAIN FOUND ITSELF ON THE BRINK OF A  
MAJOR FOOD CRISIS IN DECEMBER, AS MINAGRI REVEALED A  
DISASTROUS 25 PERCENT HARVEST LOSS AND AN ALARMING TREND  
TOWARD CULTIVATION OF "SAFER" BUT STARCHIER FOOD CROPS.  
THE GOR, WORRIED ABOUT STARVATION AS WELL AS POLITICAL  
UNREST, APPEALED FOR OUTSIDE HELP. BUT THE CRISIS SPARKED  
NEW INTEREST BOTH IN CURBING RWANDA'S RUNAWAY POPULATION  
GROWTH AND IN PROMOTING HIGHER-PROTEIN CROP CULTIVATION.  
CANADA, ONE OF RWANDA'S MAJOR DONORS, ANNOUNCED A NEW \$6  
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MILLION IRRIGATION PROJECT TO BRING SCARCE NEW LAND UNDER  
CULTIVATION. A CHRISTMAS EVE VISIT WITH MOBUTU AND A  
SUBSEQUENT TOUR OF RWANDA BY ONE OF MOBUTU'S CLOSE AIDES  
GAVE PRES. HABYARIMANA A CHANCE TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH ZAIRE.  
AND FINALLY, INDEPENDENCE HERE AND FORMER PRESIDENT KAYIBANDA  
DIED QUIETLY. END SUMMARY

## 1. BEAN CROPS FAIL, ANOTHER FOOD CRISIS LOOMS

CONFIRMING WHAT WE ALL KNEW AND EXPECTED, FONMIN NSEKALJE CONVENED DIPLOMATIC CORPS DECEMBER 16 TO RECITE DISMAL FIGURES ON CURRENT FOOD CROP HARVEST AROUND THE COUNTRY AND TO APPEAL FOR A NEW FOOD RELIEF PROGRAM ALONG LINES OF 1974-75 RELIEF EFFORT (76 KIGALI 986 AND 997). WEATHER WAS AGAIN THE VILLAIN, FIRST A SEVERE DROUGHT WHEN IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN RAINING ON NEWLY PLANTED CROPS (JULY-SEPT) AND THEN EXCESSIVE RAINS WHEN IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DRY (OCT-DEC). RESULT: LOSS OF AT LEAST ONE-FOURTH OF THIS SEASON'S FOOD CRIPS, SEVERE SHORTAGE OF SEED FOR NEXT SEASON'S PLANTINGS, AND DEEPENING POLITICAL WORRIES AMONG THE REGIME'S LEADERS.

WITH A FEELING OF DEJA VU, WESTERN DIPLOMATIC CORPS MEMBERS AND SOME VOLAG REPS HELD "STRATEGY MEETING" DEC. 21 TO CONSIDER HOW TO RESPOND TO FONMIN'S APPEAL. ALL AGREED THAT CROP LOSSES WERE WIDESPREAD AND THAT SOME OUTSIDE HELP WOULD BE NEEDED. HOWEVER, MANY HAD DOUBTS ABOUT GOVT FIGURES (MOST ARE CONDUCTING THEIR OWN INFORMAL SURVEYS) AND SEVERAL--SWISS AND GERMANS IN PARTICULAR--RECITED BITTER TALES OF HOW AID WENT AWRY LAST TIME. CONSENSUS WAS THAT RELIEF EFFORT SHOULD HINGE UPON (A) GOR WILLINGNESS TO DO ITS OWN SHARE OF PLANNING, ORGANIZING, AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION; (B) DIPLOMATS' OWN EVALUSTION OF SHORTAGES AND HOW THEY SHOULD BE MET; (C) BASIC REFORM IN KEY GOR MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION AGENCY OPROVIA; AND (D) CLEAR GOR DETERMINATION TO TAKE CONCRETE STEPS TO ALLEVIATE PROBLEM OVER LONGER TERM. IN LATTER REGARD, ALL AGREED THAT AID-SPONSORED FOOD

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STORAGE PROJECT WAS IMPORTANT STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION (PRESENT BEAN STOCKS: 1100 TONS).

HOWEVER WEAK GOVT'S FIGURES MAY BE, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SEVERE CROP LOSSES HAVE OCCURRED--AND THAT FOOD SHORTAGES WILL BECOME CHRONIC AND POLITICALLY DANGEROUS IF RWANDA'S EXPLODING POPULATION CONTINUES TO STRAIN THE LIMITS OF ITS PRIMITIVE SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE UNDP RESREP, PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA ALLUDED TO THE POLITICAL OF HUNGER AND WORRIED THAT MASSES OF HUNGRY PEASANTS COULD DO TO HIS REGIME WHAT THEY RECENTLY DID TO HAILE SELASSIE'S IN ETHIOPIA. HE ALSO POINTED TO OUR OWN AID FOOD STORAGE PROJECT AS A KEY ELEMENT IN FENDING OFF THESE DANGERS.

## 2. FACING UP TO POPULATION PROBLEMS -

ONE SALUTARY SIDE-EFFECT OF LATEST FOOD CRISIS MAY TURN OUT TO BE A MORE REALISTIC GOR VIEW OF RWANDA'S DEMOGRAPHIC

PROBLEM. AFTER YEARS OF PROCLAIMING THAT THE COUNTRY'S STRENGTH LAY IN ITS PEOPLE AND GROWING POPULATION, THE GOR IS TAKING FIRST STEPS TOWARD DEVELOPING A POPULATION POLICY. (RWANDA'S OFFICIAL GROWTH RATE IS 2.6 PERCENT; UNOFFICIALLY, IT IS CLOSER TO 3.2 PERCENT. ITS DENSITY--ABOUT 234 PER SQ KM OF ARABLE LAND--IS AMONG THE HIGHEST IN AFRICA.) SOME NOTABLE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

-- LATE LAST SUMMER, A GOR-SPONSORED "COUNCIL ON POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING" WAS FORMED. IT HAS SINCE MET SEVERAL TIMES--QUIETLY-- TO DISCUSS INFORMATION-GATHERING ACTIVITIES NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY FORMULATION.

-- IN EARLY DECEMBER, AN IPPF REP CONSULTED WITH COUNCIL OFFICIALS ON A PLANNED CONFERENCE IN MARCH AIMED AT DRAFTING A LOW-KEY PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TO LAY A BASE FOR FURTHER ACTIVITIES.

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R 060749Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4473  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA  
AMCONSUL BUKAVU  
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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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-- IN COMING WEEKS, SILAS NIYIBIZI, GOR SEC GEN FOR YOUTH AND RWANDA'S ONLY DEMOGRAPHER, WILL ATTEND 19TH SESSION OF UN COMMISSION ON POPULATION IN NEW YORK. HIS ATTENDANCE WILL MARK THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL RWANDAN INTEREST IN COMMISSION ACTIVITIES.

-- PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT, RWANDA'S NEW 5-YEAR PLAN, WHICH HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED TO EMBASSIES, HIGHLIGHTS THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION/FOOD PRODUCTION/UNEMPLOYMENT

CRUNCH AND CALLS URGENTLY FOR A NEW NATIONAL CENSUS AND A DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY BASED ON CHILD SPACING. "MERELY INTENSIFYING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WILL NOT SUFFICE OVER THE LONG TERM IF PRESENT POPULATION GROWTH RATES CONTINUE," SAY THE PLAN'S AUTHORS IN WHAT MUST BE THE MOST FORTHRIGHT OFFICIAL DICTUM ON THE SUBJECT TO DATE.

3. BEANS VERSUS BANANAS: GOR SEEKS TO HALT TREND TOWARD "SECURE" CROPS -  
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STUNG BY REPEATED CROP FAILURES, INCREASING NUMBERS OF RWANDAN FARMERS ARE ABANDONING CULTIVATION OF HIGH PROTEIN BEANS IN FAVOR OF SAFER, EASIER-TO-GROW BANANAS, SEET POTATOES, AND MANIOC. THE RISE IN BANANA PLANTING IN PARTICULAR HAS BEEN DRAMATIC--AND INEBRIATING. MOSTLY MADE INTO UNNUTRITIOUS BUT TASTY BANANA BEER, RWAND'S 1.7 MILLION TONS OF BANANAS, UP 16 PERCENT IN THE PAST DECADE, NOW REPRESENT ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF TOTAL ANNUAL FOOD PRODUCTION. (BY COMPARISON, PRODUCTION OF BEANS, CORN, SORGHUM, AND PEAS, DOWN 17 PERCENT FROM 1966, ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY 13 PERCENT OF TOTAL PRODUCTION.)

TO COUNTER THIS ANTI-NUTRITIONAL TREND, THE GOR MINAGRI BEGAN A CAMPAIGN IN DECEMBER TO DISCOURAGE BANANA PRODUCTION. AT A MEETING OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS (PREFETS) IN DECEMBER, INSTRUCTIONS WERE GIVEN TO ENFORCE STRICT LIMITS ON BANANA PLANTINGS AND TO "ENCOURAGE" CULTIVATION OF BEANS AND OTHER HIGH PROTEIN CROPS ON SCARCE ARABLE LANDS. AND TO DISCOURAGE DRINING (MANY RWANDANS BREAKFAST OR SNACK ALL DAY LONG ON BANANA BEER, WITH PREDICTABLE RESULTS) ALL BARS HAVE BEEN ORDERED CLOSED UNTIL 5:30 P.M., THE END OF THE GOR WORKDAY. ATTENTION IS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO ALTERNATIVE USES FOR BANANAS, SUCH AS FLOUR OR FRUIT. BUT WITH MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF RWANDA'S 4.3 MILLION POPULATION DEPENDENT UPON SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE AND THE WHIM OF NATURE, THE GOR CAMPAIGN IS NOT LIKELY TO MAKE AN EARLY DENT IN THE BANANA BEER BUSINESS.

4. CANADA MOVES INTO AGRICULTURE -

PLEASED WITH RESULTS OF ITS INVESTMENT IN RWANDAN HIGHER EDUCATION, THE CANADIAN GOVT HAS NOW DECIDED TO BROADEN ITS AID PROGRAM HERE BY MOVING INTO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. CANADA RECENTLY UPGRADED RWANDA FROM AN "ELIGIBLE" TO A "PROGRAM" COUNTRY, AND NEXT MARCH CANADIAN AID (CIDA) EXPERTS WILL BEGIN A 5-YEAR \$6 MILLION PILOT IRRIGATION PROJECT TO BRING SCARCE NEW LANDS UNDER CULTIVATION IN DRY NORTHEASTERN  
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RWANDA. IF SUCCESSFUL, CIDA HAS INDICATED THE PROJECT WILL EXPAND INTO OTHER REGIONS.

CURRENTLY, CANADA IS ENGAGED IN A \$9 MILLION PROJECT TO DOUBLE THE PHYSICAL SIZE OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, BRINGING ITS TOTAL INVESTMENT THERE TO \$35 MILLION (THE EXPANSION IS THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPRESSIVE CONSTRUCTION WORK NOW UNDER WAY IN THE COUNTRY). THAT, COMBINED WITH CANADA'S ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY, SEVERAL SMALLER PROJECTS, AND FOOD AID, WILL BRING CANADIAN ASSISTANCE TO A TOTAL OF NEARLY \$6 MILLION ANNUALLY IN 1977. ACCORDING TO A CIDA OFFICER, CANADA'S INCREASED AID EFFORT RESULTS FROM ITS DECISION TO FOCUS ON THE 25 LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND ON ITS CONVICTION THAT POSITIVE POLITICAL CHANGES IN RWANDA UNDER THE SECOND REPUBLIC--ESPECIALLY DECENTRALIZATION OF GOVERNMENTAL POWER INTO PREFECTURES AND COMMUNES--MAKE RWANDA A GOOD INVESTMENT FOR CANADIAN AID DOLLARS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4474  
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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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5. RWANDA SETTLES DEEPER INTO KINSHASA'S ORBIT -

WITHOUT THE USUAL FANFARE, PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA LEFT THE

COUNTRY BRIEFLY DEC. 24 FOR BUKAVU AND A SUMMIT MEETING OF THE "ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF GREAT LAKES COUNTRIES" (THE SO-CALLED TRIPARTITE WITH ZAIRE AND BURUNDI). MEETING'S OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE WAS TO FIRM UP COMMUNITY'S STRUCTURE, CHOOSE A SECGEN, AND FIX A BUDGET. BUT FROM RWANDA'S STANDPOINT, IT SEEMED TO BE YET ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR HABYARIMANA TO CURRY FAVOR WITH ZAIRE'S MOBUTU AND TO CONFIRM THEIR GROWING PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP. HABYARIMANA CHOSE THE OCCASION TO INVITE ONE OF MOBUTU'S CLOSEST LIEUTENANTS, PRESIDENCY DIRECTOR BISENGIMANA, TO MAKE A RED-CARPET TOUR OF RWANDA DEC. 26-31 AND TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES FOR GREATER BILATERAL (N.B. NOT TRILATERAL) ECONOMIC COOPERATION. AGENDA INCLUDED JOINT EXPLOITATION OF LAKE KIVU--FISHING, TOURISM, AND OF COURSE METHANE GAS--AS WELL AS HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS. BISENGIMANA TANTALIZED  
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RWANDANS BY SUGGESTING "MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS" MIGHT BE CREATED BY TWO GOVTS WHICH COULD BEGIN IMMEDIATELY TO PLAN AND EXECUTE PROJECTS.

WE SO FAR HAVE LITTLE INSIDE INFO ON WHAT WAS DISCUSSED EITHER AT BUKAVU OR WITH BISENGIMANA. WE SHARE KINSHASA'S DOUBTS (KINSHASA 10693) THAT ZAIRE IS IN FINANCIAL POSITION TO UNDERTAKE ANY MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WITH RWANDA (ALTHOUGH MYTH OF ZAIRIAN WEALTH IS FIRMLY FIXED HERE). THERE SEEMS NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT GOR--WHICH FRETS CONSTANTLY ABOUT MORE RADICAL COUNTRIES ON ITS BORDERS--FEELS COMFORTABLE AND REASSURED IN THE ZAIRIAN POLITICAL EMBRACE.

#### 6. EX-PRESIDENT KAYIBANDA DIES -

RWANDA'S FIRST PRESIDENT, GREGOIRE KAYIBANDA, DIED AT HIS HOME NEAR GITARAMA FOLLOWING A HEART SEIZURE ON DECEMBER 15. HE WAS FIFTY-TWO. RUMORS OF THE DEATH OF THE ASCETIC, "ANTI-HERO" FATHER OF RWANDAN INDEPENDENCE SPREAD WIDELY AND RAPIDLY, BUT REACTIONS WERE APPARENTLY CALM AND UNEMOTIONAL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE HABYARIMANA GTVT (WHICH OUSTED KAYIBANDA IN A BLOODLESS COUP IN JULY 1973) WAITED AN UNEASY WEEK BEFORE CONFIRMING THE FACT, ALTHOUGH HABYARIMANA REPORTEDLY SENT A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE FUNERAL CEREMONIES. THE GOR ANNOUNCEMENT ACKNOWLEDGED KAYIBANDA'S EARLIER LEADERSHIP ROLE BUT SAID HIS EFFORTS WERE "TARNISHED BY THE ANTI-CIVIC GANG SURROUNDING HIM." MOST RWANDANS STILL BELIEVE KAYIBANDA WAS A GREAT MAN WHO MADE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO RWANDAN NATIONHOOD, BUT ALSO ONE WHO STAYED TOO LONG IN AN INCREASINGLY ISOLATED PRESIDENCY.

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